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Bd. Feb. 1871



John Thomas Cardinal

THE HIGHWAYS OF PEACEFUL COMMERCE HAVE
BEEN THE HIGHWAYS OF ART.

AN ADDRESS,
DELIVERED AT LIVERPOOL,
ON
TUESDAY, AUGUST 30, 1853,
ON OCCASION OF THE
OPENING OF THE CATHOLIC INSTITUTE,
BY HIS
EMINENCE CARDINAL WISEMAN.

LIVERPOOL:
ROCKLIFF & SON, 50, CASTLE STREET;
LONDON:
RICHARDSON AND SON, 172, FLEET STREET; BURNS AND LAMBERT, 17,
PORTMAN STREET; C. DOLMAN, 61, NEW BOND STREET; AND
T. JONES, 63, PATERNOSTER ROW.

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1863, Aug. 21.

Gift of

Chas. E. Norton.

(Fl. N. 1846.)

THE following Address may be considered as a sequel to the one delivered by the Author at Manchester, on the 28th of April. To that, however, considerable additions were made in publication. In this, no change has been made, beyond the insertion of two or three sentences omitted in delivery to save time. Again he must regret the difficulty of compressing into an Address, delivered to a mixed audience, subjects requiring much more detail to render them justice. Still, with other more important occupations weighing upon him, this is the only way which he has of expressing his opinion on them. Nor does he think that, from consciousness of great necessary imperfection in the performance of his task, he ought to refuse such assistance as he can give to great educational or charitable undertakings, by turning to account the pursuits, or rather recreations, of leisure hours.

TALACRE, Sept. 2, 1853.

ADDRESS.

GENTLEMEN,—Experience has so often shown me that a subject, though apparently barren and in unskilful hands, will gradually expand beyond original expectation and the best intentions, that I cannot but think it will be a mutual gain, if I save the time usually allotted to mere preliminary courtesies. On the one hand, I must now, more than on any previous similar occasion, husband my strength, of late somewhat impaired; and, on the other, I am convinced that no length of speech could do justice to the feelings excited in me by the warm-hearted reception which you have given me. Allow me, then, to content myself with this simple, but sincere acknowledgment, and to proceed at once to the object of my discourse.

The first man who traverses a field, whether fresh from the plough, or green from the growing sward, or white with the virgin snow, will leave a track behind him, which will guide the next who follows. It will not be mathematically the shortest; it will curve, or go zig-zag from gap to gap; but ten to one, the next comer will unthinkingly pursue it, in spite of its deflections, and wear its marks deeper, and define it more clearly, and another and another will do the same, till the beaten path is formed, which, if not prevented, becomes an indisputable road.

What we thus frequently see occur on a small scale, has been the operation of civilization from the beginning. By an instinctive skill which the American Indian possesses, and his fellow-savage, the trapper, easily acquires, man will thread the forest, and bridge the morass, in his onward progress. The desert, which stretches its hundred miles of shifting sand before him, pathless as the ocean, does not arrest it; and bold as he who with "a heart thrice

bound in brass" trusted the first canoe to the faithless sea, was the first traveller, who, on foot, or on the camel, ventured to stamp foot-prints—the seal on its earliest charter of possession—on the solemn waste; next with straining eye sought the palm-tree on the horizon, where he might find a scanty shelter and a brackish spring, and gained its resting-place; and then pushed forward again, with sun and stars for his guide, till he reached an unknown fertile region. And his slender path perhaps allured others to pursue, though they knew not whither it led, nor if he who traced it had perished on it: till, by degrees, the track, though wandering and almost chance-drawn, was defined by the very bones of men and beasts that blanched on it; and "the way of the desert" was mapped for the caravan as clearly as the Appian or the Cassian.

And still more wonderful is it, when huge chains of mountains interpose with their torrents and their glaciers; with their crags and their ravines; with their peaks and their chasms; and with their giant monarchs crowned with snow, and overtopping their grim army, as Saul did the rest of Israel; that roar out in thunders, from cloud and cataract, "man passes no further on!" But be it Alp or be it Andes, man *will* pass on. The earth was given him as his kingdom; and he will not be deterred from exploring every portion of it, by the opposition of what has been made subject to his dominion. He will creep along the torrent's side; he will clamber up the rock's very face, trusting to the frail hold of the shrubs in its clefts; he will leap over the crack in the snow; he will cut steps in the ice: he will thus find out by degrees the easiest pass, and lead others over it. So sure is this huntsman's survey, and so certain is this shepherd's engineering, that when, at last, the high-road has to be cut for armies to pass, it is found necessary to deviate but little from the muleteer's track, followed for ages before, as "the way of peaceful commerce."

So natural to man is this imitative exercise, this following of the leader in his migrations, that even the ocean itself seems to have its paths thus definitely marked out.

For in his interesting lectures, Lieutenant Maury has shown how our skilful navigators have been doubling the length of their voyages, merely from obedience to conventional routes, crossing and re-crossing the same sea, in order to get into Captain Cook's track, as though his must necessarily be the best.

There can be no doubt, then, that from earliest ages regular lines of intercourse were thus established between nations, whom nature seemed to have separated by the apparently insuperable barriers of seas, mountains, and deserts; though various certainly were the uses to which they were applied. When will history cease to make heroes of destroyers, and monuments out of ruins? When will she choose other landmarks for her epochs, than the invasions of unsparing armies, or other dates for memory than the Peloponesian or Punic wars? If this is hopeless, so long as we deal with times of different moral state, we may derive some consolation from the long silences of history, and believe, that if from time to time devastation and desolation form her prominent topics, there are intervals of ages during which, if no event deemed worthy of her pen occurred, mankind enjoyed some peace, and made silent progress in its arts. When in Grecian history we read of Alexander's or Darius's army passing through the mountain defiles called the Celician or Amanian gates, we examine our map to find them; (1) but for one army that then entered them, there had been for centuries troops of peaceful merchants, who had brought through them the luxuries of India, to refine and enrich the inhabitants of Asia Minor. Or, when we are astonished, in our school-boy days, with the exciting narrative of Hannibal's passage over the Alps—a favourite subject for school exercises from the days of Juvenal—we forget that he naturally selected an already beaten track, that of the Little St. Bernard; which, if inconvenient for unwieldy elephants and spirited barbs, had been long a good enough road for Helvetian mules or Gaulish adventurers. In fine, it was probably the singular campaign of Massena and Suwarrow, in 1799,

(1) See Mr. Barker's *Lares and Penates*, p. 21.

which made known to Europe the passage of the St. Gothard, with its then slender aerial bridge, bespanning, like a rainbow, the chasm below a roaring and foaming cataract,—over which, since 1118, when a good Abbot of Einsiedling built it, the industrious Switzer had borne the produce of his toil to the rich plains of Lombardy.

In fact, war, when it went forth to destroy, marched over the highways which peaceful industry and labour had created and used for ages; and gave them an undeserved glory, or even made them for the first time known. This, I have observed, is a consolation; but one to which history only sparingly helps us. It is not much to be read of, but it may be often pleasingly meditated on, to reconcile us to our own kind. While great nations burst into light, only as does a volcano, by boiling over and exploding, with a furious blast, which pours streams of liquid fire over fertile regions to burn and blacken them, and we have detailed to us, in elegant prose and melodious verse, all the grand terror of the scene; we turn away with pleasure to dwell on those long lines of dynasties which display no great conquerors in the East and South. We may for a time shut our eyes to many unknown sufferings, the feuds, the oppressions, the civil wars, the pestilences, the famines of those periods: but we may expatiate upon the busy scenes which are reflected by the smooth waters of the Euphrates or the Nile, as upon their banks arise the terraced gardens, and the many-storied palaces of infant cities. We see the crowds of workmen—slaves no doubt, or serfs at least—raising the hugewinged lion or sphynx at the gate, carving or painting the marble or granite walls, erecting the slender obelisk, or stretching out the massive quay. Gaily painted vessels glide along the stream, some bringing from distant provinces their agricultural produce, others bearing away the manufactures of the capital. This, in spite of many calamities, and much individual suffering, is the view on which one may love to dwell, as the normal state of ancient Assyria and Egypt; and it must have been that of other kingdoms. Indeed, had the historians of Greece told us half as much of the beautiful

things made, as they have of the wicked things done, in its polished cities; had they made us as familiar with the growth of their arts, the processes of their industry, the methods of their commerce, the refinements of their life, and the social and domestic virtues, if they existed, of their citizens, as we are with their ostracisms, their squabbles, their hemlock-cups, and their licentiousness, the survey of the past would resemble more a picture of beauties to be admired than a chart of rocks to be avoided. History, however, has carefully chronicled the crimes and wars of past ages; and has left us to construct for ourselves, from the few monuments which they have spared, or of which later records have reached us, the annals of the beautiful arts. Do not think that I am about to undertake so noble, but so arduous a task. Whether what I may attempt can be of use, as a slender contribution towards this great work, I will not even presume to surmise; I shall be quite satisfied, if it enables me to make an hour or two pass profitably and interestingly to you.

Before endeavouring to trace the ways through which art has travelled, it may be useful to us to be assured that it has never travelled by the way of war, or of conquest. There never was a country which more satisfactorily tested this principle than Egypt. From the earliest period it had an art of its own, obstinately indigenous, as much belonging to its soil as the lotus or papyrus to its waters. In architecture, sculpture, painting; in decoration, writing, illumination, its art was national, and most characteristic. It existed early enough for Moses to have studied it. It lasted long enough for Christianity to destroy it. For it was heathenish in its very essence, in its rind, and in its core. It was entirely an outward expression of pagan untruth. It was, consequently, nearly stationary. The practised eye of the antiquarian or artist will see in that lapse of many ages a certain ebb and flow, a slight decline, and a partial revival; but the main and striking features scarcely alter. The type of Egyptian art flags or varies but little.

Yet four times was this country conquered, and in

three instances long and successively held in subjection by nations which had an art of their own; but in this the conquerors were conquered, and had to yield. Not to dwell on its temporary subjugation to the Assyrians, it was thoroughly subjected by Cambyses to the Persian rule, 525 years before Christ, and in spite of one successful rebellion, and partial insurrections, it remained in subjection for 111 years.(2) Yet, the conquerors were obliged to have their deeds recorded, not in the sculptured forms and legends of Persepolis, but in the colours and hieroglyphics of the Pharaohs. Then came the still more complete and influential conquest by the Grecian power, under which Egypt was not merely a province of a distant empire, but the seat of a new dynasty, foreign to it in every respect. From its invasion by Alexander the Great, 332 years, till the death of Cleopatra, thirty years, before Christ, Egypt was held for 302 years by a race of kings mostly pacific, or who, when warlike, carried their contests into other lands. The period of this conquest was one when the literature and arts of Greece were at their very perfection, when eloquence shone unrivalled in Demosthenes, philosophy was directed by Aristotle, and painting represented by Apelles; and when the civilization of the people had reached its highest refinement. And so soon almost as the Ptolemies had established their reign, Demetrius Phalereus bore thither the very pride of Grecian science, made Alexandria the rival of Athens, which he had governed, and laid the foundations of a school of philosophy, which in time outshone the original teacher, and may be said to have continued, more or less active, till it broke out again with greater brilliancy in the third century of Christianity, in Clement and Origen. Shortly after, too, was the first great public library in the world founded at Alexandria, which continued in existence till it was destroyed by the Saracens. In it were collected all the treasures of Greek learning, which thus became substituted for the mystic lore of Egypt. The polished language of Attica supplanted the uncouth dialect of the Nile; laws, habits, and customs

(2) Clinton, *Fasti Hellenici*, vol. ii. p. 50, 3d Ed.

were changed : but every attempt to introduce the beautiful art of Greece failed ; it scarcely impressed a passing modification on the surface of the national representations. The Greek Ptolemies, though they might erect a tablet or a pillar of their own, though they might compromise so far as to have a bilingual or trilingual inscription set up, were obliged to submit to have their polysyllabic names cut up into little bits, and each portion represented by a feather, or a lion, or an owl, as the case might be, to suit the artistic and intellectual capacities of their subjects.

Not even imperial Rome, the next and last subduer of that tenacious race, could wrench from it its arts, any more than its religion ; and it continued to grow its deities in its gardens,⁽³⁾ and to record its new emperors in hieroglyphics, till Christianity replaced the one, and holier symbols superseded the other.

But there could not have been a stronger proof of what I have asserted than the entire history of Alexander's conquests. It was the reckless march of destruction, such as the aggressive incursions of all military despots,

“ From Macedonia's madman to the Swede,”

have ever been. He overthrew cities, rich with the treasures of preceding civilizations, without remorse, as Medes had ruined Assyria, and Persians Media, and he gave nothing in place. A few Greek legends upon Bactrian coins, and a few monuments about Alexandria, mark the extent of a dominion, held for centuries by the most polished nation of antiquity, that covered its own soil with monumental beauty ; while, at both boundaries yet stand in lordly magnificence, the rock temples of primeval India, and the huge Memnonium of Egypt, as they were seen by the great Alexander. How truly do the Indus and the Nile bear between them this axiom, written in ruins across that vast field of victory—that you may subjugate the bodies of men, but you cannot conquer their thought.

How then has art, which, to be genuine, must be the language of a nation's intelligence, thoughts, hopes, desires

(3) Juvenal.

—soul—how has she held her progresses from people to people? Not, as we have seen, riding on the warrior's car, not borne on the wings of victory. She has travelled at a quiet pace over the desert with the pilgrim; she has sailed with the merchant in his galley; she pondered over what she had seen, thoughtfully, as the camel slowly marched; and she was more solicitous for the precious models, than for the merchandise, which she had stored in the vessel's hold.

Let us look for a moment on the early civilization of Italy. Before the foundation of Rome, we find a wise, a peaceful and a refined people, the Etruscans, possessing large and flourishing cities, well cultivated territories, good roads, a federal constitution, wise laws, and active industry. Architecture flourished among them, solid and massive; painting, modelling, and carving were well understood; their metal-work was beautiful, in gold and in bronze. The origin of art among this people, which spread itself over all central Italy, is certainly as yet, like all else about them, a mystery. In the tombs of cities, supposed to have been destroyed by Rome as early as 399 years before Christ, are to be found vases of various manufactures, very early, rude pottery, what is considered almost Phœnician or Egyptian, native vessels of beautiful form and decoration, proved to be such by inscriptions in Oscan or Tuscan, and works of Greek origin, exquisitely finished, representing Homeric scenes, and bearing inscriptions not merely in Greek, but declaring the work to be Athenian.⁽⁴⁾ Those who believe the tombs, which are every year opened and found full of these treasures, to have been sealed up from the time Tarquinia, Veii, or Vulci was destroyed, and consequently to exhibit to us an art, coeval, at latest, with the early times of Rome, have to account for it's bearing all the characteristics of the most perfect Greek art, at a period long antecedent to the development of art in Greece. An amiable authoress supposes that Homer, travelling through Italy, sung there

(4) By this inscription: "One of the prizes from Athens." See *Catal. of Vases in the Brit. Mus.* p. 127.

his lays, and thus sowed the seeds of that pictorial poetry which bore such ample fruit upon Etruscan pottery.(5) But supposing this to be true, and that the Iliad and Odyssey had begun to be thus transcribed in Etruria, by the pencil, as early as 927 years before Christ, and as 400 years before Pericles, we shall have to account for the singular coincidence, that each country, at such distant periods, should have hit upon exactly the same manner of representing the same scenes: the same detached figures, the same attitudes, the same costume, the same expression. But the fact of one single Panathanaic Amphora, or prize-cup of the Athenian games, which were not instituted till 566 years before Christ,(6) being found in a sepulchre at Vulci (such as in Nos. 571,572 in the British Museum) destroys this conjecture. We must, therefore, conclude, as Müller does of this very town, that long after the Etruscan cities had been reduced by the Romans, they continued, as *municipia*, to enjoy many privileges amounting almost to self-government, and persevered in their former and peaceful pursuits. They continued to bury their dead, where, and as, they had done before, only adding to their sepulchral gifts, more valuable and more beautiful specimens of art.(7)

This shows us a singular contrast between two branches of the same people. Rome, governed for a time by the Tarquins, an Etrurian dynasty, no doubt knew the arts which on every side surrounded her; but, soon possessed by a warlike spirit, and a desire only to rule, too early inspired with the thought, later embodied in the words of her greatest poet, that to others she must leave the arts, and consider dominion and conquest her only prerogative, she seems to have abandoned their pursuit to her humbler

(5) Mrs. Hamilton Gray, in her interesting History of Etruria.

(6) Clinton, F. H., vol. ii, p. 238. All dates are taken from this most valuable work.

(7) Mrs. H. Gray, in her "Sepulchres of Etruria," p. 476, gives a tomb of a lady named Cecina (a family yet existing at Volterra, where the monument was found), with Etruscan inscription, of which she observes, "the style seems almost as late as the time of Julius Cæsar."

neighbours. The Etruscans were essentially a commercial people. They came originally as a colony into the country; and, after their first wars of settlement, spread by a similar process. They had harbours and ships; they traded with Egypt, with Greece, and with Carthage. They exported their own manufactures, and imported, age by age, the improved production of other countries. Their native industry was thus stimulated, the best models came before their artists, and they could afford to put the work of their wheel and their pencil beside the productions of eminent Greek artists. And thus, while art had died away in Rome, or was rude and infantine in it,—while it seemed to fly from the walls, which as yet enclosed but civil broils, or hatched thoughts only of conquest,—it rode gaily in the bold galley of the Etrurian trader, and gave a refinement to his polished home.

But it is time for us to turn our thoughts to Greece, and see the way by which art travelled thither, to make it her highest throne. When we read the history of that wonderful country, just as, emerging from a fabulous twilight, the first rays of history shine upon it, we are perplexed and confused by the restless movement of its population. It resembles, to use a homely simile, the shuffling and sorting of the cards before the game fairly begins; or the discordant and independent noises of instruments tuning to open a grand burst of harmonious music, or the hurrying to and fro of a body of men who have to act in something together, till they get into their places;—such marching and countermarching, such shouldering of one another and themselves, out and in, of Pelasgians, Hellenes, Dorians, Ionians, Æolians, and Bœotians, who appear and re-appear from Thessaly or Macedon, or elsewhere; till, by degrees, all fit in, and settle down, and soon commence their respective extraordinary careers. What is the meaning of all this? Two great families of the human race, the descendants of Sem and of Cham, have long since been at rest, have had their empires, their mythologies, their sciences, their arts, become matters of tradition, matured by ages. The quiet domesticity which

to our days marks the inhabitants of the East, though not then sunk to their present torpor, had settled the races from which they spring round the centre of the original repeopling of the world ; and Assyria and Egypt had established their great dominations in their very first resting-place, in the middle of Asia and in the gates of Africa. Yet still the "Genus Iapeti"—the race of Japhet—to which was to belong the great civilization of the world, was restless and wandering ;—some of the family were pushing towards the frozen north, there to form those store-houses of Divine vengeance, that one day should be opened upon their degenerate brethren, and pour out flood upon flood of barbarian incursion. Others, more fortunate, fell upon the pleasant isles of Greece, and its fair continent ; but still displayed the restlessness of their race, and moved hurriedly to and fro, before they chose, or kept, their final seat. To this characteristic and inborn energy was to be due that spirit of migration and colonization which, beginning with Greece, has reached its greatest force in our time and country.

When this people found itself at rest, it had, it could have, no art. Beyond what every tribe, raised above the savage state, possesses, it could own but little ; and it is the work of ages to obtain it, still more to perfect it. That it sprung up indigenous on the soil, no one has thought ; and the interesting enquiry presents itself to us, from whom did the first knowledge of art come to the Greeks ?

Had this question been proposed a few years back, it would have been answered to a certainty : "From the Egyptians." And this, not merely because resemblances can be pointed out between the arts of the two countries ; not only because the features of their architectures, particularly in what we call Doric, are almost identical ; not simply because corresponding similarities may be traced in the mythologies which form, in both, the groundwork of art ; but for a much shorter reason. There had existed as near to Greece, as the African coast, a nation far advanced in painting, sculpture, and architecture ; it is the

simplest solution of the enquiry to suppose that these passed thence into the neighbouring country, which was the next in time to develop the same arts. Now, this principle being most natural, and generally correct, was easily assented to; and it made the genealogy of art most simple.

It was not till the monuments of Assyria came to light that the pedigree could be well disputed. The monuments of Persepolis had not been sufficient to create a new hypothesis; but I think that, from the moment of our later discoveries, the entire parentage of Greek art is changed; and this forms one of the most important questions connected with my theme. There can be no doubt that to one of these countries we must attribute the rise of Hellenic art, and I think there can be no hesitation in the choice. I must proceed, however, with some method in what I have to say; and, first, I must premise, to gain credit rather for the simplicity of the theory than for my own sagacity, that, long before looking into Mr. Layard's interesting volumes, I visited these monuments, while yet in the cellars of the Museum, and felt so clearly at once what I am going to explain, that I soon returned with a friend, who was, better than any one else I knew, acquainted with the characteristics of ancient art, and who had not seen these monuments, to show him the source of Grecian art. Nor did I overlook the Lycian-room, as it is called, and the valuable links which it establishes between the two. And further, let me observe, that my conclusion, instead of falling short of, would go beyond, those which Mr. Layard modestly suggests. He seems to go no further than to establish an influence of Assyrian art upon that of Greece; first direct, through the dominion of the Assyrian empire, in the days of its greatest prosperity, when it had possession of Asia Minor, and then "indirect, through Persia, after the destruction of Nineveh." Mr. Layard then enters into a learned and most valuable illustration of these views, wherein he brings together many authorities and proofs. To this work I gladly refer any one anxious to examine our ques-

tion in its details. But as I observed that I was inclined to go further than Mr. Layard, it is in this:—His idea that Assyrian art influenced Greek art, supposes, I think, the existence of something that we may call art prior to the Assyrian action upon it. Of this we may make sure, that however early a date we may assign to Greek art, that of Assyria was by ages anterior to it. Take the time of Homer, 900 years before Christ, and admit that the shield of Achilles, or other works of art mentioned by him, were as beautifully designed and executed as they are described; and you probably have not reached the period when the first and most beautiful Assyrian sculptures had been destroyed in the first palace of Nineveh.(8) If, therefore, Grecian art, such as we know it, was not born on its own soil, and such resemblances are found in it to Assyrian art as authorise us in concluding that the latter exercised an influence over it at so early a period, we may not be far wrong in concluding that it actually gave it birth. And if again, at the Persian period, we find Greek sculptures bearing traces of oriental influence, shall we imagine that it was brought back by this influence from a previous and higher stage, or that some older characteristic art received a new modification from its temporary contact with Persian domination? It is simpler to conclude that, if heretofore it was in the nature of things to attribute to Egypt the merit of kindling in Greece the torch of genius, it is now equally logical, and far more plausible, to transfer that praise to its great eastern rival. The only secure method for deciding such a question is that of examining the type and characteristics of art, in these various schools, and comparing them together. A painting, a carving, a piece of metal-work, of unknown authorship, can be at once referred to a source, by its possessing characteristics of a peculiar country, city, or even master. Nor could any one now find any difficulty in deciding whether a piece of sculpture found was of Egyptian or Assyrian workmanship. His eye at once tells him, because it seizes on those distinctives of the two styles, which, combined together

(8) Layard, *Nineveh and its Remains*, vol. ii, p. 162.

in either, forms its type. Nay, a head, a foot, a beard, or a fragment of dress, would enable you at once to form a sure judgment.

What, then, is a type in art? Is that model, in the artist's eye, sometimes personal, sometimes national, to which he always adapts his forms—the mental mould in which every figure that he makes is cast. Raphael has his, so has Beato, Angelico, and Del Sarto, and Francia, and Guido, and Rubens: an idea of form, of arrangement, of colour, of expression so prevalent, so dominant in his mind, that, in spite of any effort, he cannot work outside of it. Then, these types, however varied, are themselves, so to speak, modelled out of the same clay, and have common characteristics,—the Italian distinct from the Flemish, the Flemish from the Dutch, the Dutch from the German, the German from the Spanish,—but all Italian, and all Flemish, and all Dutch, and all German, and all Spanish artists will possess common types, that make us at once know to what country, and even province, a picture belongs. As a style of art recedes from us, we lose sight of the personal type, or it becomes merged in the national. We can tell a statue to be Greek and not Roman; we can even tell it to be of a given period; but we cannot tell, what an old Greek dilettante no doubt could, whether it be the work of Phidias or Praxiteles, or Scopas, or Calamis, or Lysippus. In like manner, possibly, the Assyrian critic may have been able to detect some eminent master's hand in the curl of a lion's or a bull's hair, or in the *pose* of a warrior king, where we can only see the indiscriminate chiselling of an army of what Mr. Ruskin calls "mud-born and onion-fed" labourers. And an Egyptian, too, may have been able to discover a Raphaellesque touch on some face of Rameses II, where we can only generically distinguish the handling of an Egyptian brush.

Now it is not difficult to point out the characteristic differences between these two primitive rivals in dominion and in art, such as will give us the genuine type of each. Any one walking through an Egyptian museum, containing monuments that extend through nearly 2,000 years, will

see points of resemblance so strong, and of distinction so slight, that he will find it difficult to believe there is such an interval between the ages of the first and the last. It might strike you somewhat thus: "How smooth and polished is the surface of every statue and sculpture! How carefully is all exaggeration avoided in every part! How subdued, or even suppressed, is all muscular action—there is nothing here brawny, strong, athletic: nay, even there is an absence of vigour, strength, activity! And there is a corresponding want of mental energy, expression, character. The face says nothing; the eyes look nothing; the mind is doing nothing! All are calm as crouching sphynxes, almost as much at rest as the figures on their coffin-lids. And even where action is depicted, it makes no new muscle start forth; it gives tension to no sinew; it swells out no vein; it bestows no beauty of attitude; it puts no fire in the eye; it does not expand the chest, or inspire the head. Multitudes move as if their legs, arms, and bodies were drawn with parallel rulers; their tunics exactly of the same length; their bodies precisely the same size. They are a regiment made to measure, and clothed by contract. Through successive ages, everybody who dies has the same drawings made upon his funeral roll, sketched in unvarying form, or has a statue erected in the same kneeling posture, holding the same tablet as his neighbour."

Such a judgment would not be far from conveying an idea of the type of Egyptian art, which is not difficult to seize, and yet would be accurate. If we look now at the Assyrian gallery, containing monuments of a briefer period, we catch at once very different characteristics, a perfectly distinct type. Many of the faults of Egyptian art are there, but not as the result of imitation—not borrowed; but merely as being the faults of all imperfect art. The profile is equally preferred; the eye is given in full upon it; there is sameness of feature, and repetition enough of subject. But with all this, there is vigour and there is majesty. Instead of a soft skin, and well smoothed contour, there is an excess of muscularity which is unnatural,

and consequently inaccurate. Figures in perfect repose, or inactive, at least, have limbs almost distorted by the attempt, rude and absurdly conventional, to make them sinewy and strongly developed. In men and in animals, bulls, lions, horses, camels, rhinoceroses, and antelopes there is the same mode of treatment; and in the larger figures of both classes, the rational and irrational, but especially the latter, the limbs appear almost netted, or bound with cords, so exaggerated and sharp is their subcutaneous structure made to appear. Nor will it be found that this varies with motion or altered position of the limbs. There is a muscle of a horse-shoe shape upon the shoulder of every quadruped, which will be found in the same place and form, whether it be standing or running. Yet in all this, however inaccurate in design, and rough in execution, there is a good intention, a vigorous idea, and a love of truthfulness, which form a type as distinct from that of Egyptian art as two extremes can be. The very peccancy of excess makes the type the more decided and peculiar.

But, at the same time, with all the monotony of action, and sameness of feature, there is a power of imparting nobleness, majesty, and dignity to the expression. It is remarkable in the human-headed animals, it is more so in the kingly figures. Those in Paris are said to be even nobler and grander than we possess in England; but I have not seen them. Ours suffice to prove that there was strong artistic feeling in those who designed and executed these portions of the Nineveh sculptures; a feeling which, under better auspices than those of selfish tyrants, who would see nothing around them but repetitions of their own deeds, and of a religion which wasted the energies of art upon monstrous chimæras, might have matured it to the perfection which it afterwards received in Greece. There is a gravity, a thoughtfulness impressed on the countenances, not unmitigated by that peculiar smiling tendency which is characteristic of all archaic art.

But further, the type of the Tigris differs greatly from that of the Nile, by the power of motion which it imparts.

in ways of doing things, in the first than in the second of these schools. This may be verified by an illustration, within the reach of most persons. In his last work Mr. Layard has engraved two parallel representations from the two countries. They record the moving, respectively, of a colossal bull, and of a colossal statue. There are curious observations to be made on the mechanical means employed in these two operations; but these are not to our purpose. Although in both there is that ignorance of perspective which is common to all imperfect art, yet, while the Egyptian labourers are placed in most symmetrical rows, on lines, above each other's heads, the Assyrian slaves (for the stick is too plainly lifted over their shoulders) are properly going in divergent directions. But what is more especially to be remarked is, that these are really pulling and walking; you can tell what every body is doing; whereas, the others are motionless upon their shelves, giving no evidence of exertion or labour, but apparently holding up the rope from falling, with limbs most methodically arranged.(9)

Such, I conceive, is the type of Assyrian art, as contrasted with that of Egypt: and it cannot be difficult to decide which is to be traced into Greek art. I have said *into* it, whereas I ought more properly to have said *through* it; for it is of the very nature of an artistic type, once entered into a school, never completely to be effaced. It may be improved upon, overlaid, modified in a thousand ways, but its influence is irradicable, perennial, and perpetual; for, in truth, it is like a seed which may be blown about, and carried to different soils, which will die or languish upon many, but where once it falls upon what kindly receives it, springs up, grows, flourishes beyond the plant that furnished it, exceeds it in size, beauty, strength, and fruitfulness, becomes indigenous, inrooted in the earth. It may be said, in this respect, to resemble the Guernsey lily, a stranger to neighbouring lands, the roots of which are thought by natives to have been washed on shore from some exotic vessel that bore them and was wrecked, when, finding a congenial soil and climate, it

(9) Discoveries in the Ruins of Nineveh and Babylon, 1853, p. 113.

colonized the island, and became the floral gem of that island of flowers. And so Chinese or Indians may have gazed often upon the very marbles now in the British Museum, in their journeys of traffic to the central emporium of the world, and yet have caught there not one single inspiration, but returned home contented: the one to his dumpy, round-faced, and shaven Mandarin, on his fan or China-plate; the other to his three-faced idol, squatting hideously in his cavern-temple.

But not so with the Grecian mind, already fermenting with poetic fancies, and after having written them in imperishable lines, longing to give them the life that visible forms can alone fully impart to thoughts. Its poetry had traced the mould in which the type must itself be cast, full of energy, full of action, and full of majesty. If once such a type presented itself, it was sure to light up at once the materials prepared; and, once on fire, they would be no more quenched. How was it likely that such a contact could be expected to occur?

The Egyptians were not a commercial nation. With, perhaps, one doubtful exception, they founded no colonies. Till the port of Alexandria was made by the Greeks, they had little to do with the sea. The nations of central Asia were necessarily debarred from commerce by ships, but they as necessarily commanded the great overland traffic between the east and west. The Greek colonies in Asia Minor—not dependencies of the mother country, but generously launched in independence from their birth—soon became at once luxurious and industrious. They could not be the one without the jewels, the spices, the gold, the rich stuffs of India; they could not be the other without taking the pains to obtain them. The great seat of Oriental empire remained steadily fixed for ages in Mesopotamia, commanding the transit between east and west. It was the centre no less of Oriental traffic. Thither the merchants of the earth flocked, and there was found—as it is described in imagery drawn from it, though applied to another city—“merchandise of gold and silver, and precious stones, and of pearl, and fine linen and purple, and silk and scarlet, and all the fine wood,

and all manner of vessels of ivory, and all manner of vessels of precious stones, and of brass, and of iron, and of marble; and cinnamon, and odours, and ointment, and frankincense, and wine, and oil, and fine flour, and wheat, and beasts, and sheep, and horses, and chariots, and slaves, and souls of men.(10)

From Mesopotamia is a clear way to Cilicia, where the gates of the Taurus were open to receive the merchant and his treasures, as they were closed to repel the invader and his army. The facility with which Assyrian and Persian led armies into that tempting region proves that the transit was neither long nor toilsome; and a great highway of commerce united the two districts, and brought the inhabitants of Greece into contact with those of the furthest east, in the bazaars of Nineveh, Babylon, and Susa. There they would come into contact no less with the gorgeous art of Asia. If congenial, it could not fail to be adopted.

I leave you to see in Layard's first work the clear evidence that all the beauties of Greek ornament, and the taste of their application to arms, garments, furniture, and utensils, are to be found, even down to their most decided conventionalities, in the Assyrian sculptures. This is at once a most potent, though not a complete argument; for smaller objects of manufacture bearing the ornamental art of a nation are easily transported. But the slabs and lions of palaces must have been seen on the spot.

With the first efforts of Greek art we are totally unacquainted. As Augustus destroyed the homely brick Rome, and left us a marble one in its place; as our forefathers sharpened out the Norman arch, and clustered the massive piers that sustained it—so, probably, the Greeks of the age of Pericles became ashamed of their ruder monuments, and replaced them by more perfect works. We must be content to commence where we can in tracing the characteristics of their arts. Its march through Asia Minor would lie along its southern coast, through Cilicia, and then skirting the north of Lycia. There we meet those early sculptures to

(10) Apocal. xviii. 12, 13. This imagery is borrowed from the Oriental traffic of the real Babylon, under figure whereof, for obvious reasons, pagan Rome is described.

which I have alluded, found by Sir Charles Fellows on the banks of the Xanthus, (11) and now safe in the British Museum. That they are closely allied to the Assyrian monuments no one doubts; but this resemblance, in the point of view which we are treating, is more in objects which can hardly be explained except beside the marbles themselves.

We travel on, therefore, to Ægina, an advanced port of Athens, the last stage in travelling to it from Nineveh. There we have the earliest evidence of the Greek type of art. A family likeness, a sameness of expression reigns through all the figures; a placid smile, serene and smirking, over-spreads the countenances of all—of the dying man on the ground, of the assailant soldier, of the Minerva that presides over the calm contest. A strong, perhaps more than necessary, development of the human frame marks every figure, accurate compared with that of eastern sculpture, but still hard, wiry—not *well kneaded*, to imitate an Italian phrase. (12) And here, too, is action, though still timid, without violence or over-exertion. We may descend to further particulars. Compare the wounded or dying man in the right pediment of the Phigaleian room with any corresponding one (and there are plenty) in the battle scenes of the Assyrian gallery. The attitude is quite the same, and certainly not a natural one, nor likely to be made in two distinct and disconnected schools; the expression is similar, for there is an absence of emotion, a freedom from pain, that is quite consoling.

And if thence we step forward to the Elgin room, shall I venture to say, that in those sublimest works of man's artistic hand there can be traced one symptom of Sargon's or Sennacherib's art? I should be bold, indeed, to say so; but I need not do it. The type, once admitted into the Greek mind, purified of its grossness, refined, assimilated to its own perceptions, ideas, and feelings, ceases to belong to any one else. It is mastered, appropriated, and so domesticated that

(11) See his "Travels and Researches in Asia Minor and Syria," 1852. Page 123.

(12) *Non bene impastato*.

it cannot be won back. But neither can it be driven out. The statue of Theseus presents us that exaggeration of frame, that bone and sinew, each prominent to a degree inconsistent with one another, which will be found in heroic statues of the best period. Once that taste introduced, then perfected by the gymnastic exercises which gave so much glory in Greece, it creates a characteristic which disappears as art declines. But, even when most exaggerated, there is a softness and proportion which makes all appear natural. The love of the horse, and its treatment in art, also present traces of the original type. Indeed, so perfectly the work of one thought is that equestrian procession which formed the frieze of the Parthenon, that a cast of it for the new crystal palace at Sydenham has been perfectly restored by Professor Monti in a singular manner. Whatever portion of a horse or rider was anywhere broken he has not remodelled; but he has found in some other part of the sculpture so exact a repetition un mutilated, that he has been able by a cast from it to restore the fracture. And thus he has produced a restoration which defies detection by the most critical eye.

These details, though I have withheld myself from pursuing them to anything like the length they really require, are, I fear, tedious; and I hasten on to complete this portion of my subject. I observe, then, that the type of perfect Greek art has, in common with that of imperfect Asiatic art, the calm dignity and majesty of expression which I have attributed to the latter. Strong and violent emotions, except in very few instances of athletic excitement, do not mark its noblest work. The discobolus throwing his disk, the charioteer conqueror in the games, Hercules resting from his labours, Apollo flaying Marsyas alive, or discharging his fatal arrow, Jupiter grasping his thunderbolt, Minerva wielding her lance, Aristides, Demosthenes, Sophocles, Homer, —all have impressed on their countenances that type of almost impassive, confiding serenity, which forms the perfection of character in the god, the hero, and the great mind of heathen conception. Even where severe suffering or sorrow is depicted, as in the dying gladiator or the family of Niobe, it is without distortion, without violent expression,

yet exquisitely tender, and moves you more by its very gentleness than more impassioned representations can do. In fact, in many of the finest works, and where, as in the frieze just mentioned, many figures occur, expression may be said to be neglected, and mere calm beauty of feature and form is placed before the eye, though it speak not to the soul.

Of earth, earthly, indeed, is all this beautiful art of ancient Greece. Among its splendid monuments there is not one that leads man's affections above the earth on which it stands. There is not one figure among them all that lifts its eyes towards heaven, as the Christian does a thousand times, to the dwelling-place of Him from whom he came and to whom he goes. There is no symbol there of faith, no emblem of hope, no conception even of charity. There is no reflection of heaven on the human countenance, no ray from above along which the eye and the heart travel towards a holier and a happier region. In a much ruder age, when every limb was made out of proportion, and the body was distorted, there was a power to throw into the countenance a radiancy of joy, a purity of heart, a peace of innocence, a cloud of compassionate or penitent grief, which the noblest artists of Greece had never imagined, and would not have known how to express. It proves that there are spheres of art sublimer than human genius can even soar to, a part of that mystery of wisdom which has been hidden from the wise and the prudent ones of this world, and revealed to its little ones. It proves, as strongly as any reasoning can do, that when man has reached the highest point in art, as in wisdom, which the action of the finest minds on the accumulated practice and experience of ages can build up; when the highest pinnacle has been placed on his mighty tower, he is no nearer the heaven which he pretended to reach, than when he laid his first course; but that, on the ground itself, wings may be given to weaker and humbler men, with which they may fly above the boasted work, and arrive at the longed-for goal.

And before leaving the cradle of our art, Assyria, let me be allowed to remark how truly the very monuments torn from the walls of its palaces were a seal of destruction set

upon its power; not because those walls were weak by their workmanship, or frail by their materials, or unsuitable in their forms, but because they are the records of a cruel, a destructive and an unsparing race; nothing represented on them but repetitions of the same scenes of war and carnage, relieved by mimic war, the fierce hunting of the lion or the wild bull. The same besieging of cities, the same slaughter of foes, the same leading off of women and children to captivity, the same cold-blooded executions, the same scenes of barbarous cruelty exercised on the fallen—such are the cherished representations and proofs of their greatness with which the kings of Nineveh loved to refresh their thoughts, when, like him of Babylon, who was driven for seven years to consort with the beasts of the field, they “were at rest in their house, and flourishing in their palace.” (11) Not a picture has been found displaying refined feeling, love of the good, kindness of heart, or even scenes of domestic life, except to exhibit the drudgery of poor captives. And the inscriptions which these monarchs raised to themselves were of a corresponding character. If rightly interpreted, they speak as follows:—“Whilst I was in Ariboua, the cities of Lutuka I took. I slew many of their men; I overthrew and burned their cities; their fighting men (or deserters from my army) I laid hold of; on stakes against their city I impaled them.” In another place, of the same great monarch, who built the great palace, it is said, “he slew their women, their slaves, their children, and carried away their flocks and cattle. Their houses he burned like stubble; the cities of Nerib, their principal cities, he destroyed.” (12) Surely they who strike thus unmercifully with the sword are doomed to perish by it.

One may not unreasonably conjecture that Assyria, Egypt, China, and India matured their art too soon. There was no time for pre-existing poetical creations on which art could dwell and labour. Greece had a long interval of heroic dreaming, which came floating down upon a tradition gorgeously decked out by old song, but in all the aerial and

(11) Daniel iv. 1.

(12) Layard's *Nineveh and Babylon*, pp. 355, 353.

indefinite beauty of a vision. When art came, it had characters and deeds to represent, clothed in ideal beauty and grandeur higher than those of men, yet closely linked with humanity. Its models were prepared for it; it needed not to draw them from the objects it saw. It could represent a warrior, like Hercules or Theseus, fighting against monsters or tyrants, without making them, as living warriors did, slaughter women and butcher children. Assyria had no materials for art but the atrocious realities of the day.

And far less was this the case when a new art sprung up, to which I now must turn, having for its subjects truths more marvellous, more sweet, more fair than any fable, sung in canticles more sublime than any lyric strain, presenting characters, features, actions, sufferings, such as no imagination of man had before put under his hand to portray. What is the beautiful in ancient art to us, who can neither revere nor love what it presents to us, except so far as it was the precursor and preparer of another, and, to us, a dearer and more sacred school, the advantages of which we still enjoy? It was indeed necessary that the seed should die in the furrow before it sprung up again to a new life: that art should almost disappear from the earth till its misappliances should have been forgotten. But, certain it is that Christian art rose from two sources, both traceable to the ancient, long-hidden streams of classical art. And in this, too, we shall easily see how true is the proposition which I am illustrating.

Art never took a strong hold on Rome. Busts, imperial statues, triumphal arches, tombs, gave plenty of work for artists during the early empire; but there was never any great original feeling about it, such as to create a distinct type. It was imitative, or rather a copyist, of Greek art; and as this declined so likewise did that of Rome. By the time of Constantine it had faded in both countries: still it did not expire. In every part of the Christian world sumptuous churches began to be erected, and no expense was spared to decorate them. This gave a new impulse to art, which had this effect, that if it did not enable it to recover its lost ground it prevented its further decline for a century

or two at least. Under Honorius and Justinian a new style of art was introduced into the decoration of churches—that of covering them with mosaics. In 425 the Empress Galla Placidia came to Ravenna and encrusted the walls of the octagonal church of SS. Nazarius and Celsus with magnificent mosaics, which yet retain their freshness. And in the episcopal palace of that city, the Archbishop daily celebrates the Divine Mysteries in his domestic chapel yet decorated with the mosaics placed there by his predecessor, St. Peter Chrysologus, in the fifth century. It was about this time that a partial revival of art may be said to have taken place. Several of the finest Basilicas of Rome were decorated as we now see them, and many of my hearers will know them well: Sta. Maria Maggiore, St. John Lateran, St. Paul, and Sta. Sabina. At this period, too, were executed many Christian sarcophagi, and other monuments yet remaining in Roman churches, which display an art far from barbarised.

But, in the meantime, Western Europe was losing the countenance and support of the emperors, and becoming, at each successive generation, subject to a new invasion. Its glorious monuments were destroyed by fire, or suffered to crumble to decay. They were buried up with their treasures, to be providentially preserved till they were wanted for better purposes. The seat of empire had been translated to Byzantium, honoured with the name of new Rome, or Constantinople. There it was nearer the old seats of artistic traditions, in which yet some genius lingered; there it could give all the employment to skill which a new capital demanded,—to the architect, the sculptor, the painter, the goldsmith, and the weaver. Art, therefore, such as it had become, was there honourably maintained and royally encouraged. As centuries rolled on its decline became more rapid in the west; and it is time that we consider how its extinction was totally prevented and how its revival was prepared. You are not, I am sure, disposed to believe, that an invasion or a predatory incursion brought it back from some distant country.

While the arts were thus declining, the maritime and mercantile spirit of Italy was developing, and laying the

foundations of modern commerce. Besides lesser but spirited competitors, some of which, as Amalfi and Pisa, opened the high roads of eastern traffic, two great rivals, known to all the world, occupied the very heads of the seas which nearly environ Italy. Their positions were singularly contrasted. Genoa sat as on a triumphal throne above the waters, her form rising like an amphitheatre, of which the harbour was the arena, upon a lofty and steep mountain's side, with tiers of palace above palace, and church over church, all gaily painted and dazzling in the sun, crowned above all by the bright green of the hill, with waving pines, cypresses and olives. She embraced in her arms, with jealous guardianship, her rich galleys safely treasured in her port; and looked on right and left along a lovely territory, receding on either side, over which the vines boldly invaded the rock, and dressed it out with their wreaths to almost the water's edge; while in front the widening bay showed her, to an immense distance, her homeward-bound and outward-bound vessels, crossing each other on the calm and brilliant sea. It was a proud position; and she looked like a haughty, but beautiful land-queen who had subdued the sea, and ruled over it with a watchful eye and a powerful hand. She was well described as "*Genova la Superba*." But Venice made herself from the beginning part of the element through which she wished to be great. She had no other home, no other life. It was the circulation which flowed through her frame, taking up the throbs of her great heart at St. Mark's and its adjoining palaces and squares, and carrying them through the wide artery first which feeds her noblest parts, and then bearing them forward, divided and subdivided into countless and intricate canals, not as now, stagnant and black, but sparkling beneath the prows of her thousand gondolas, or furrowed by the barges that bore her merchandise to and from her well-stored magazines. Her ships were incorporated with herself: when they shook out their sails they seemed to detach themselves from the folds of her ample skirts, and when they returned they flew back straight into her very bosom—she had no other harbour for them. Nay, one might have imagined that the whole city was but a magnificent fleet,

ready, if any insult had been offered on a distant coast to the lion of St. Mark, to slip its moorings, and rush to avenge its honour. He who ruled in its name sought not to subdue the deep, but only with his ring to espouse it. The doge would not have the sea hallowed to Venetian hearts for a slave—he claimed it as his bride.

For centuries the great commerce of the East was in the hands of this noble city. It was a princely traffic. Colonies and settlements were made on every coast favourable for trade; forts were built and garrisoned, where such protection was necessary. Noblemen and merchants united the love of discovery to that of honourable profit, and, like Marco Polo, penetrated into the very heart of Asia, and forestalled many modern discoveries. But, as I have said, the heart of Venice was St. Mark's; her best affections clustered about it; her pride was in its being nobler, grander than anything else on earth. Her traffic enabled her merchants to bring from distant provinces every thing that was rich in material—marbles, columns, gems; and nothing was too costly or too beautiful to adorn the object of every Venetian's proud affection. But in their voyages the Venetians had observed that, at Constantinople, art was in a much higher state than in Italy; there were superior architects and better workmen; they would have the best, and, accordingly, in 977, they laid the foundations of that noble and awe-inspiring church, under the direction of artists engaged in Greece. It was just seven years after this that the Emperor Basil had a work of art executed by eight artists, which gives evidence to this day of the immense superiority of Byzantine over Italian art. It is a menologium, or brief account of the saints in each day of the calendar, illuminated in bright colours, and still brilliant gold, preserved in the Vatican library, and published by Cardinal Albani. This may be considered the very type of Byzantine art, by reference to which the prevalence of its style in any painter may be tested.

In this manner did Venetian commerce bring back lost art in its rude germ triumphantly on its prows; and from its Eastern lagoons broke on slumbering Italy the first dawn of a beautiful coming day.

Pisa, in 1016, imitates this example, and calls in Greek artists, and shows them high honours, erecting to Buschetto, the most eminent of them, a magnificent monument. In 1066, Didier Abbot, of Monte Cassino, sends in the same direction for able workmen to embellish his church with carvings, mosaics, and other rich adornments.

About the same time Cardinal Hildebrand, having been on an embassy to Constantinople, and admired the bronze work of its founders, ordered there the gates which had to adorn the principal entrance of a great Roman basilica.

The example of Didier was followed by the Abbot of La Cava and others. But this was far from being all. The whole of Italy, from the eighth century to the thirteenth, was full of Greek art. Not only did great cities and independent states, like Venice, Milan, Lucca, and Genoa, get large and public works executed by it, but every church, and monastery, and house, may be said to have been supplied, in its artistic wants, by Greece, or by its Italian scholars: triptichs in wood and in ivory, crucifixions, Madonnas, scripture histories were so completely of this school, that in the classification of art, whatever is discovered anterior to Giotto, or at least Cimabue, who was born in 1240, is at once characterised as Greek or Byzantine.

It must also be observed, that naturally, there were artists during this period of very different powers. While Italy called in, and encouraged on every side, skilful men from the shores of the Bosphorus, it is no wonder that many of an inferior order should have answered the invitation; and thus we find works, proved to be contemporaneous, of the highest comparatively, and of the lowest character. Even in St. Mark's, while the first productions of Greek skill are wretchedly poor, those of a few years later are so incomparably superior, that we must attribute them to better hands, imported, no doubt, to meet the improving public taste.

It was, then, the peaceful intercourse between the east and west, notwithstanding the unhappy religious separation which had occurred between them, and the many jealousies which the commercial republics of Italy had to encounter from a decaying empire; it was the mercantile travelling to and fro

which brought back once more Grecian art to prepare a new artistic epoch in Italy. I must, however, at this point divide my subject. The architecture of the periods through which we have glanced suffered less than any other department of art. Many of the buildings adapted from Roman halls, or basilicas, and rebuilt, or renewed, at the brighter period of Theodosius, had stood bravely the shock of barbarian incursion, its fires, its plunderings, its wantonness. They remained as landmarks, as canons, and as models. They ruled the proportions, the distribution, and the relations of the different parts. The nave, the aisle, the apse, (easily elongated into a chancel or choir,) the transept, the porch, the portico,—all were to be found there. But at an early period of emancipated Christianity, greater development than ever was given to the most distinctive element which Roman art had given to architecture—the arch. In the Basilica of Constantine, in the Forum at Rome, long called the Temple of Peace, this may be seen. But where columns were not to be found scattered on every side, ready fashioned, as in Rome, piers would naturally be built instead of them, and wider arches thrown across them. In this manner rose that multitude of churches which pervade Lombardy, the southern coast of France, and the banks of the Rhone, the Rhine, and the Moselle, and known as Roman or Romanesque. The passage from this to the Gothic is obvious and graduated. In the east another species of this generic architecture prevailed. St. Sophia may, perhaps, be considered its type church. It is to be met at Ravenna, in the church which I have already mentioned. The contact of the new hordes of eastern invaders with the Greek civilisation of the empire no doubt communicated to them those principles which, moulded in the luxuriancy of an oriental imagination, produced what we call the Arabic or Moorish style. Thus the sacred architecture of early Christian Rome was dissolved, in a manner, into different moulds, variously shaped, according to the imagination and the mind of races or nations; in the north and west more rigid, severe, and cold; in the east and south more flexible, more luxuriant, and more warm.

Having now led you thus far unskilfully, I will bid another speak, a master-mind in art. I would that I could express myself concerning Mr. Ruskin as mere feelings of admiration would prompt me. I believe that no one ever brought a keener eye for the beauty of form, a higher estimate of the sacredness and dignity of art, or an intenser feeling of its moral duties, and of its power to link man's soul to God, or a mind more brightly poetical, to the development of the theory of art. We have, moreover, had no student of its monuments more patiently assiduous, more conscientiously accurate, or more minutely precise. I doubt if any one has been so gifted before, or has blended more completely the almost opposite qualities of exquisite taste and technical exactness. But, as is the case with too many others, these noble qualities desert him when he comes to touch upon Catholic belief; and he will go out of his way to touch it, if possible, with a withering hand. Unkind, unfeeling, offensive, and even coarse in his uncalled-for censures, he neutralises almost the beauties of his latest work, by an undercurrent of false, as well as needless, aspersion upon those through whom alone he has been made to feel the beautiful, which runs through his text like a string of muttered imprecations through a glorious lyric song. Hence I cannot even quote the entire passage to which I am referring of his *Stones of Venice*, where he has been describing, beautifully, the dispersion of architecture, and then thus concludes our subject, "Opposite in their character and mission, alike in their magnificence of energy, they came from the north and from the south, the glacier torrent and the lava stream: they met and contended over the wreck of the Roman Empire; and the very centre of the struggle, the point of pause of both, the dead-water of the opposite eddies, charged with embayed fragments of the Roman wreck, is Venice. The ducal palace of Venice contains the three elements in exactly equal proportions—the Roman, Lombard, and Arab." (13)

(13) *Stones of Venice*, vol. i, p. 17. It would be out of place here to speak of Mr. Ruskin's theories, which, if not always correct, are always beautiful, and, therefore, plausible. But, throughout, there is a tendency to account for everything by a theory often fanciful, sometimes painfully so.

It was the commercial enterprise of Venice, then, that brought together these drifting fragments of a noble vessel, gathered carefully where they had been stranded, and built them up again together with a new and glorious fitness. She made a novel combination of the old elements ; for nothing, though used before, can come to her, but it

“ ——— must suffer a sea-change
Into something rich and strange.”

As her various galleys would come home, each bearing from some distant clime its richest spice, or its most fragrant gum, or its most potent drug, and the skilful Venetian pharmacist collected them together, and, with mysterious art, blended, compounded them, and so elaborated the precious medicament, which made a profitable freight for the merchant's argosy ; so did those same galleys bring from lands scarcely less distant the elements, material and intellectual, which yet astonish and delight the eye in that unparalleled city and its unrivalled cathedral.

But far more did this importation of Byzantine art do for painting. Florence was not behind other parts of Italy in employing those foreign artists. In 1013 was placed in the church of San Miniato a mosaic, in which the head of our Lord was singularly beautiful, and excites admiration at the present day. And so it went on till the noble youth Cimabue watched and watched the Greek painters at work in his native city, and played the truant from school till his bent was satisfied, and he became the first reviver of pictorial art ; or, rather, he may be considered the link between the old and the new generation. His scholar Giotto was the real father of the latter.

But what I wish principally to convey is this : that, as in Greek art, the type once accepted by it became an inextricable principle, which ruled it to the last, so in Italian religious art, the Byzantine type so completely became its once adopted principle, that no progress has ever been able to remove it.

I must be brief in my few illustrations.

First, it gave that type of Our Saviour's countenance, from which it would now be a sacrilege against art, and an

outrage on our best feelings, to depart. The early art of the catacombs had no determined type of His form or features. He was generally presented in a symbolical form; for example, as a youthful shepherd. In the East it is probable that tradition had preserved the portraiture of His sacred humanity; if not, it was equal to a creation, which, to use the words of Lord Lindsay, "comes nearer our dreams of what that likeness may have been,—nearer the idea of incarnate deity,—than Christian humility could have hoped to soar. Were this head of Christ the only tradition bequeathed to us by Byzantium, she would have the highest of all claims on our reverence and gratitude. (14.)

It was not, however, her only bequest. The last scene of Our Lord's life, His crucifixion, still remains, and ever will remain, impressed with the Byzantine idea of it. In older monuments Our Lord is represented on His cross clothed in a long linen robe. Such were the two crucifixions in mosaic put up in St. Peter's by Pope John VII., himself a Greek, in 706; and, unfortunately, when the Greek school adopted the present mode of representation, the study of the human form had been totally neglected; and an emaciated, even deformed figure, represented "the comely one beyond the children of men." Just at the time when Italy was beginning to feel its inborn genius for art energised by the imperfect but religious action of Greek art, when it was about to adopt not only its traditions but its forms, there awoke from its own soil the slumbering spirit of ancient art, and by a shorter route than eight centuries of tradition, communicated at once all that antiquity had known of the beautiful in design and execution.

Attention was turned to the pieces of ancient sculpture which were every day dug out of the ground as new buildings were commenced. Nicholas of Pisa, a pupil of the Greek school, left by Bruschetto, admired their beauty, endeavoured to copy it, and succeeded. The two streams met in friendly confluence; for they flowed from a common source. The two sisters embraced; for they owned a common parentage. There was no jealousy, no rivalry. The new classical

(14) Sketches of the History of Christian Art, vol. i, p. 76.

school sacredly preserved the tradition of the east ; and the Byzantine adopted the greater softness, accuracy and grace, the movement, life, and energy of the discovered models. They blended gracefully ; and the new, really Christian, and truly devout school of religious art arose in Europe. To return to the crucifixion : in the sacristy of Sante Croce, in Florence, is a large above-life painting of the subject by Cimabue. It has been observed that it is thoroughly Byzantine. Well, beside it is another, by his scholar, Giotto, to whom may be attributed the first glory of emancipating art from the stiff trammels of archaic forms. What a stride, to be sure, from one picture to the other. But still it is only a stride—a step. The transition is clear, the link is unbroken ; that, and every figure since, preserves it, where it does not freeze down into mere classicality. I must not enter into details ; it will suffice for my present purpose to say, that no representation of that awful scene is real, even as far as its mere visible agony goes. The late Mr. Carpue made a fearful attempt at representing it by a hideous cast, which yet exists—no one would bear to look at it ; and the Christian type of it, however varying in school or skill, whether carved in wood by the peasant in the Tyrol, or chiselled in marble by Cellini, or cast in bronze by Schwanthaler, or painted in sweet colours by Raphael, differs from the reality exactly by the same discrepancies, and on the same principles, as did the old Byzantine type.

It is this which yet remains inherent in Christian art. And so it is with the more soothing and cheering picture of Mother and Child, which the art of every country knows under the simple name of the *Madonna*. Here again the Byzantine type was grand and noble ; and it is thought that the revived Italian art soon lost it ; for every painter formed his own. But in truth it was not so. The dark tint of the countenance disappeared, a more serene grace took the place of its sterner gravity ; more sweetness, more meekness prevailed over mere majesty. Yet there remained the same modest attitude of overhanging love, the same maidenly veil on the head, the same mysticism of colours in the drapery, (for a long time the same star on the shoulder,) the same

arrangement of garb, which was neither classical nor modern, neither Jewish nor Roman, but is preserved by the painter, whether Umbrian or Flemish, although the one may make his shepherds come to adore in jerkin and hose, or the other may give his eastern kings' pages in slashed doublets and plumed bonnets. All this uniformity in arbitrary arrangements descends from the same source,—the Byzantine type. (15)

And here I cannot help repeating a remark made to me many years ago by the illustrious Overbeck, that the type of our lady found in the old and best painters is not Italian, but more Germanic. This is, indeed, strange, but not inexplicable. The old description of our Saviour ascribed to Lentulus, and certainly embodying the Byzantine type, gives him light hair, light eyes, and features no way oriental. This type was applied to his blessed mother; but this circumstance proves that, even if arbitrary models were chosen by each artist, there prevailed over them and modified them, till degeneracy came into art, a religious type which could not be rooted out from the hold it had taken upon art. And this is more conspicuous in arrangement. For a long time after every trace of Byzantine stiffness had departed, the artist loved to place the blessed Virgin, bearing her divine offspring, upon a throne, surrounded by angels or saints. Nothing can be more exquisitely beautiful than those symmetrical pictures by the older masters, especially when in their proper place over the altar. This old symbolism has kept its hold on art, in spite of the most utter naturalism that may have anywhere prevailed. It held the greatest artists spell-bound to the ancient Byzantine tradition. They might make the throne of clouds and its canopy of angels; but still, as in the Madonna of San Sisto, at Dresden, or that of Fuligno, at Rome, the inevitable law of primitive type will chasten the thought and restrain the flight of the boldest artistic genius. And now that modern Germany, emulated by France, wishes to return to a purer and more

(15) The types of SS. Peter and Paul, of other saints, and of angels, yet followed in all Christian art, are all Byzantine. I am indebted for much information, conveniently compressed, to M. Emeric David's "*Histoire de la Peinture au Moyen Age.*" Paris, 1842.

religious art, what are both doing but taking up the broken thread of old traditions, and returning back to the happy times when freedom and beauty first invested them with perfect grace?

And what follows from this long disquisition upon the revival of art in the 13th century? Why, that we owe it to that happy generosity of a commercial people, who sought out whatever was good in every country and brought it home. Whether art would have revived or not by some other process—whether it would have sprung up suddenly by a new birth, or travelled to us by some other way—no one can tell: we must be equally grateful to those through whom it *did* come. The coffee plant might have made its way to Martinique, and formed its riches in a hundred manners: but it is not for that the less indebted to M. Desclieux, who, with heroic fortitude, shared his scanty allowance of water, in a tropical drought, with the little shoots which he was bearing thither, and which he thus saved, to be the parent trees of its flourishing plantations.

Even should desolation overspread Venice, and decay ruin her splendid monuments, not thus will her claims upon our gratitude be cancelled; their records will remain imperishable upon every work of art which retains a trace of those first principles which she imported into Europe from the east.

In ancient and in modern times, then, it has been the same; the ways of art have been ever the ways of peace, and she has travelled hand in hand with the commerce which peace has ever created. It is interesting to trace this alliance in many other ways: in more than time will allow me to glance at. We look at Athens, for instance, as the great city of art; we overlook, generally, the fact, that it was the seat of varied industry and active commerce. Its great men were not ashamed of exercising it. Their orator, Lysias, had a manufactory of shields, as he himself tells us, which employed a hundred and twenty slaves. We fancy Demosthenes, the most eloquent man whom the world ever saw, to have been, like our eminent states-

men and barristers, rich, and occupied only with professional labours: yet he tells us his inheritance consisted of a sword manufactory, in which he employed thirty hands, and one of beds, which employed twenty; but in which were consumed large quantities of ivory, ebony, brass, and iron. In fact, the small territory of Attica, of 76 square leagues of sterile soil, could never have otherwise supported its population of 450,000 souls. The annual sum spent by it for wheat alone is estimated at £145,000, or nearly one-half of the whole revenue of the state, at the time of Demosthenes. And yet Pericles was not afraid to spend in public buildings alone three times a year's revenue. How, then, was its wealth kept up? Chiefly by its commerce, which consisted in works of finest art, as well as in the produce of manufactures, with which it abounded.(16) Athenæus has left us an interesting illustration of this. He tells us that the Athenians manufactured, and exported with great profit throughout Greece and Asia, a species of vases called Thericleans. They were very large, splendid, and expensive, but very heavy; a sort of Sevres in those days. The Rhodians, who were most enterprising in their commerce, started a manufacture of vessels equally large and grand, but lighter and more graceful, and gave them the name of Therypotides. (17) They undersold the Athenians; and while the heavy vessels of Athens continued to adorn the tables of the rich, those of Rhodes were to be found at every respectable banquet.

I refer you to Mr. Scherer's recent "History of Universal Commerce," or even to the account of it in the last number of the *Dublin Review*, to show how the great cities of Italy, particularly Venice and Florence, at the very time when their arts most flourished, were the most enterprising in their commerce, but at the same time were manufacturing states. It has been shrewdly remarked that Tyre,

(16.) See Emeric David's "Essay on the Influence of the Arts of Design on the Commerce and Riches of Nations," published with the essay quoted above.

(17) B. ii. c. 5.

for many ages the greatest commercial city of the world, perished entirely, because it had not a productive, but merely a transit trade. It was a port, and nothing else.

With us it is not so. The power of creating the materials for trade exists at your very door. Venice was flourishing so long as it stood in the most happy position for the commerce of the east: when another road was found and accepted, the day of her prosperity passed away. Here, however, this cannot be. The face of the old world is turned to the west, and you are on its very watch-tower, on the point whence springs forth the spirit of commerce to take its flight across the ocean. Experience has shown us how the development of commerce in this country has been accompanied by a corresponding one in taste and feeling for art. A century or two ago, in obedience to a tradition of race, war with France was the normal condition contemplated by every Englishman; yet we studiously copied all the bad taste in literature and art of our rival. Those days are past; and with the peace of the present generation, and the intercourse with foreign countries which it has promoted, art has made more progress than in centuries of war and of home imprisonment. Let, then, the manufacturers of England cultivate art in their productions—let her looms send out patterns to rival the rich stuffs of the old Italian weavers—let her furnaces bring forth porcelains that will shame the Grecian pottery—let her founderies produce graceful metal-work equal to that of Nuremberg—and then once more commerce will have reason to be proud of being the pilot of art to the most distant regions; and the vessels of England will be hailed by living generations, and celebrated by many to come, for bearing within them not only wealth and profit, but the pacifying, civilising, and refining influences of the noblest pursuits.

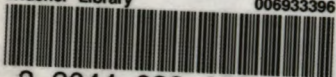
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